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R E S E A R C H

2018 Future of Marketing and AI Survey

In this latest report BrightEdge surveyed over 500 search, content, and digital marketers to gain insights into how brands are using AI to deliver a more personalized customer experience

Key Findings:

☐ Marketers Set to Use AI to Develop their Content Marketing Strategies

☐ AI is Enabling Marketers to Understand the Customer, Drive Productivity, and Create Better Performing Content

☐ Obstacles to AI Adoption Provides a Wake-Up Call for MarTech

BRIGHTEDGE

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SEO and Content Performance

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2018 Future of Marketing and AI Survey conducted by BrightEdge via SurveyMonkey. This year's survey was conducted over a one-month period during February 2018. Over 500 search, content, and digital marketers were asked 8 eight key questions related to the future of marketing and topics centered around the challenges, solutions, and adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The Shift towards AI-First Marketing

The word AI conjures up humanlike robots that move around and talk with us, but AI is mostly software, and we are interacting with it already every day. AI now impacts nearly all aspects of life, such as smart devices kept in homes and worn on bodies, chatbots participating in conversational commerce, and driverless cars–all of them synthesize customers' wants, needs, and preferences into customized consumer experiences.

The IDC predicts that global spending on cognitive systems will reach $31.3 billion by 2019. Accenture found that AI could double economic growth rates by 2035 and boost labor productivity by 40%.

From Google's Rank Brain and voice search through to Amazon recommendations, we are living in an AI-First World where we contribute to the inputs and benefit from the outputs. The inputs can be text, like in a search query, or voice commands in your car or phone. The AI outputs can also be text or voice. So, interacting with AI is very similar to interacting with your traditionally programmed computer or mobile phone. The difference with AI is that there is a neural network, advanced algorithms, and deep data to help AI understand the intent of your inputs better and provide better, more-accurate outputs.

From Data-Driven Marketer to Decision-Driven Marketer

This survey highlights the fact that Marketing is undergoing a massive transformation–the discipline is more data-driven than ever before. While marketing objectivity might have gotten a bad rap in the past for being a subjective discipline. Advanced tracking and analytics allows us to measure the performance of every banner, every email, and every search topic. Marketing has become more quantitative and accountable, but we are all cursed by the ghost of businessman John Wanamaker who quipped: "Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don't know which half." But it's not true anymore.

AI is allowing marketers to make better decisions—the single most important output marketers produce for their companies. Better decisions are why marketers get ahead and why they get promoted to higher levels of responsibility. BrightEdge wants everyone around us to make better decisions–from our execs to engineers to customer service colleagues; we wish them all better decisions because that is how we collectively succeed as community.

In 2018, what do you see as "the next big trend" in marketing?

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28.66%	25.69%	21.23%	10.40%
Consumer Personalization	Artificial Intelligence	Voice Search	Mobile Optimization

3.61%	3.40%	2.76%	2.34%	1.91%
IOT Marketing Applications	Blockchain	VR	ABM	Other
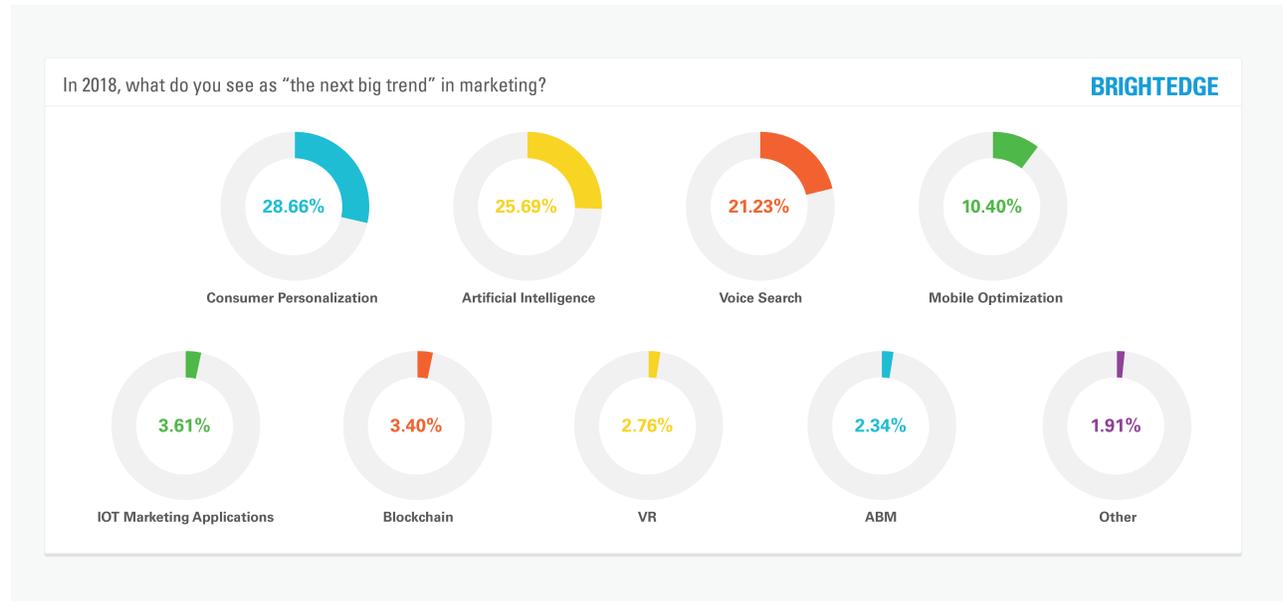
Answers

|	
Consumer Personalization	28.66%
Artificial Intelligence	25.69%
Voice Search	21.23%
Mobile Optimization	10.40%
IoT Applications	3.61%
Blockchain	3.40%
VR	2.76%
ABM	2.34%
Other	1.91%

Note that the top 3 responses, which total 75%, are all AI applications. AI is more pervasive and prominent than the respondents realized.

How likely are you to use artificial intelligence/ deep learning to develop your content marketing strategy this year?
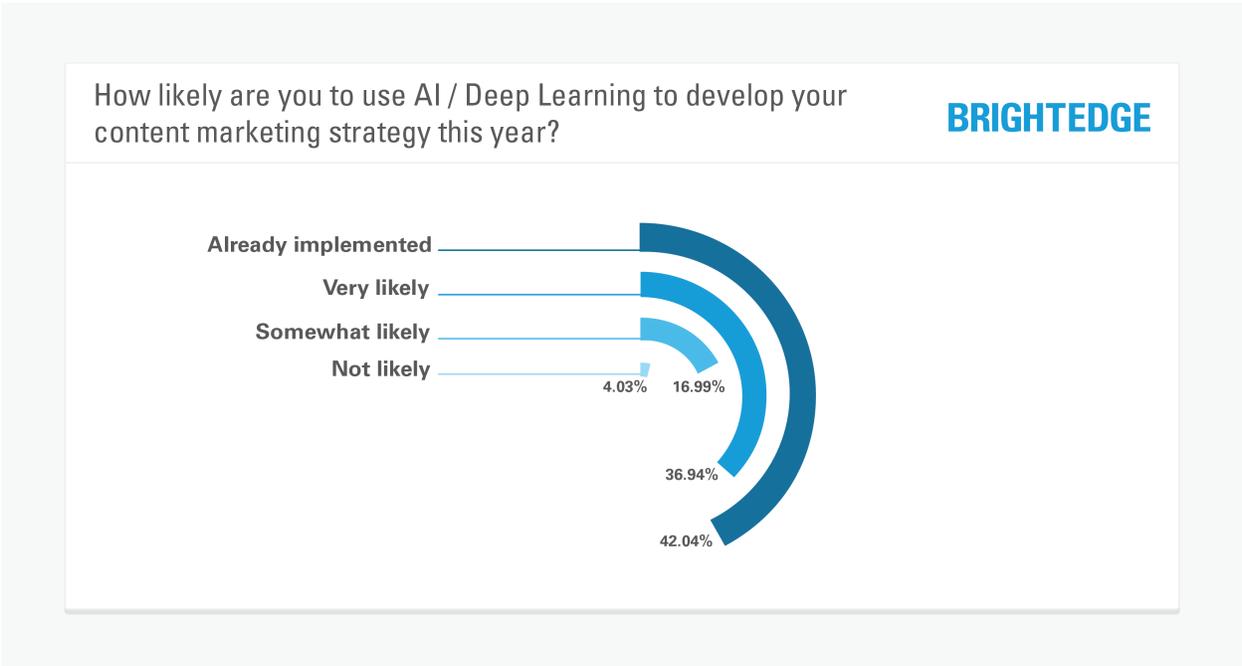
Answers

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Already Implemented	4.03%
Very Likely	16.99%
Somewhat Likely	42.04%
Not Likely	36.94%

Pure-play in-house AI appears out of reach to most at this early stage, but marketers are beginning to look for applications and solutions.

How important is AI for helping to achieve your 2018 goals?

How important is AI for helping to achieve your 2018 goals?

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AI is helping me be more effective but is not mission-critical.	**46.92%**
AI is a luxury not a necessity.	**35.24%**
AI is mission-critical. I wouldn't be successful without it.	**9.13%**
AI is all hype and I don't buy into it.	**5.31%**
What is AI, again?	**3.40%**
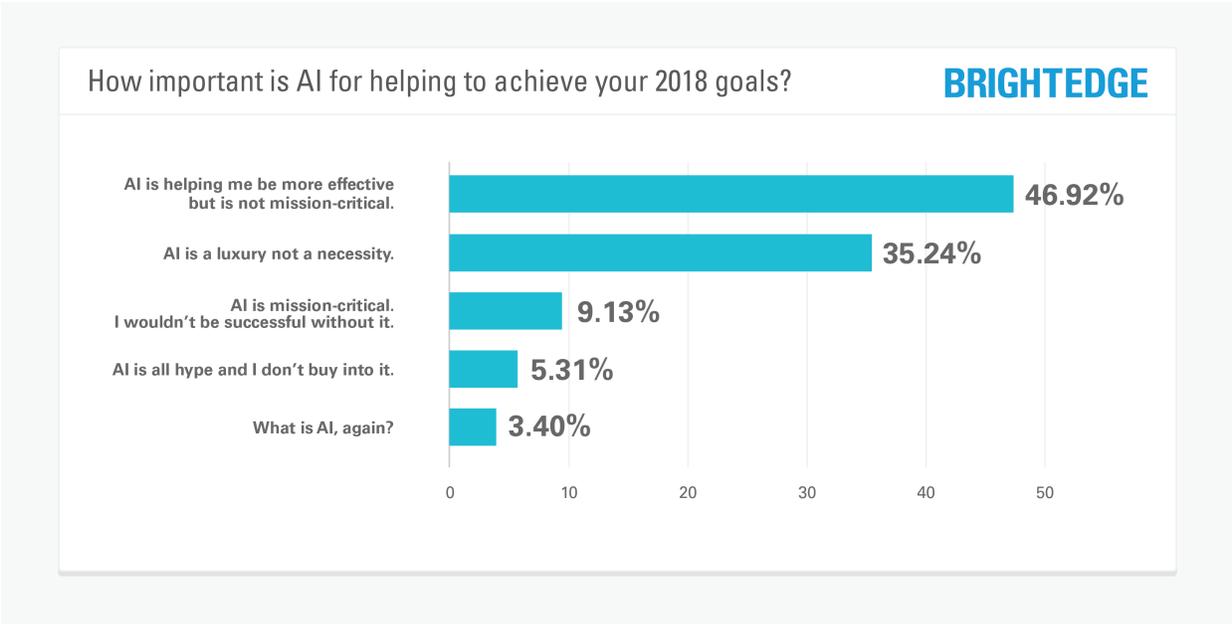
Answers

|	
AI is helping but not mission critical	46.92%
AI is a luxury not a necessity	35.24%
AI is mission critical	9.13%
AI is hype	5.31%
What is AI?	3.40%

Almost half of marketers see a constructive role for AI.

Thinking about the marketing technology you use today, what percentage of those technologies use AI today?

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9.77% 5% to 75%

17.20% I don't know

42.25% Less than 25%

1.49% 75% to 100%

16.77% 25% to 50%

12.53% None
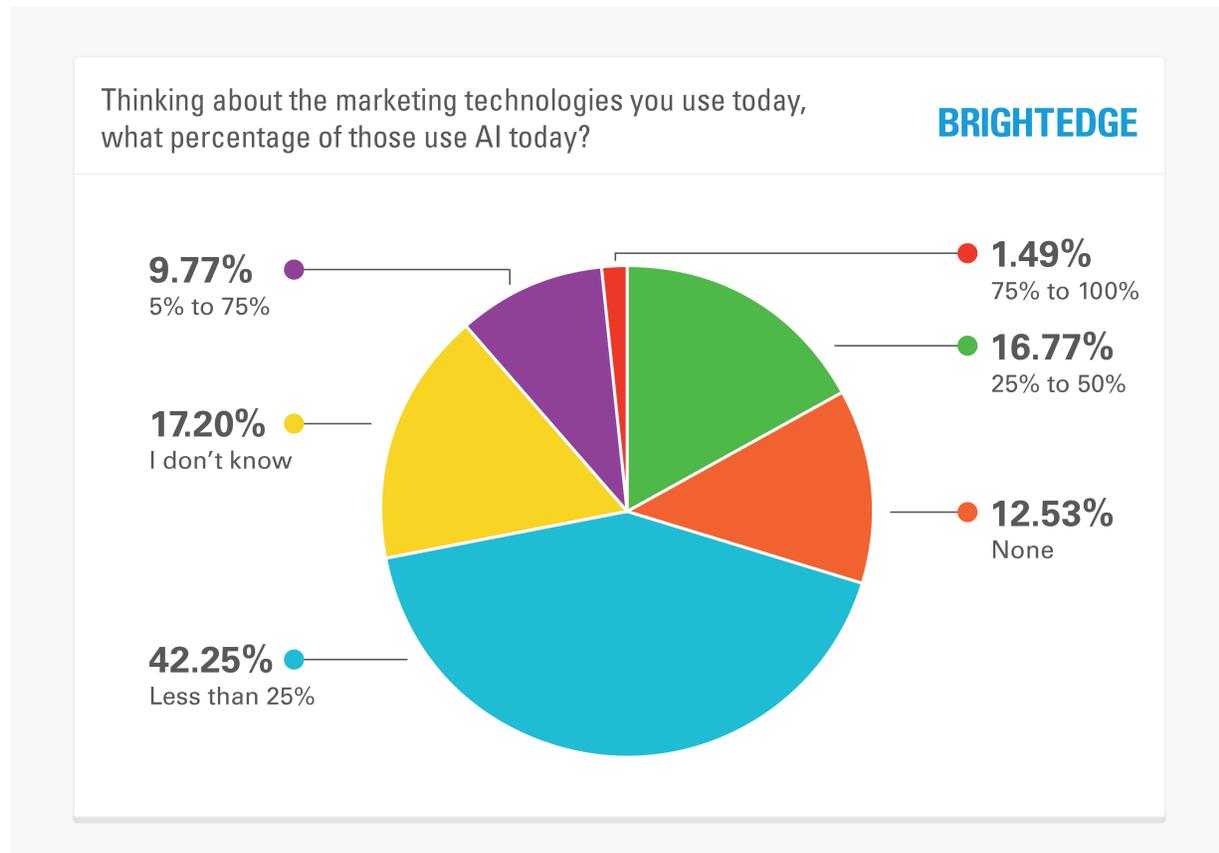
Answers

I don't know	17.20%
None	12.53%
Less than 25%	42.25%
25% - 50%	16.77%
50% - 75%	9.77%
75% - 100%	1.49%

Marketers are already aware that their most-advanced MarTech providers are adding value through AI.

I expect my current marketing technology provider to have native AI capabilities in 2018
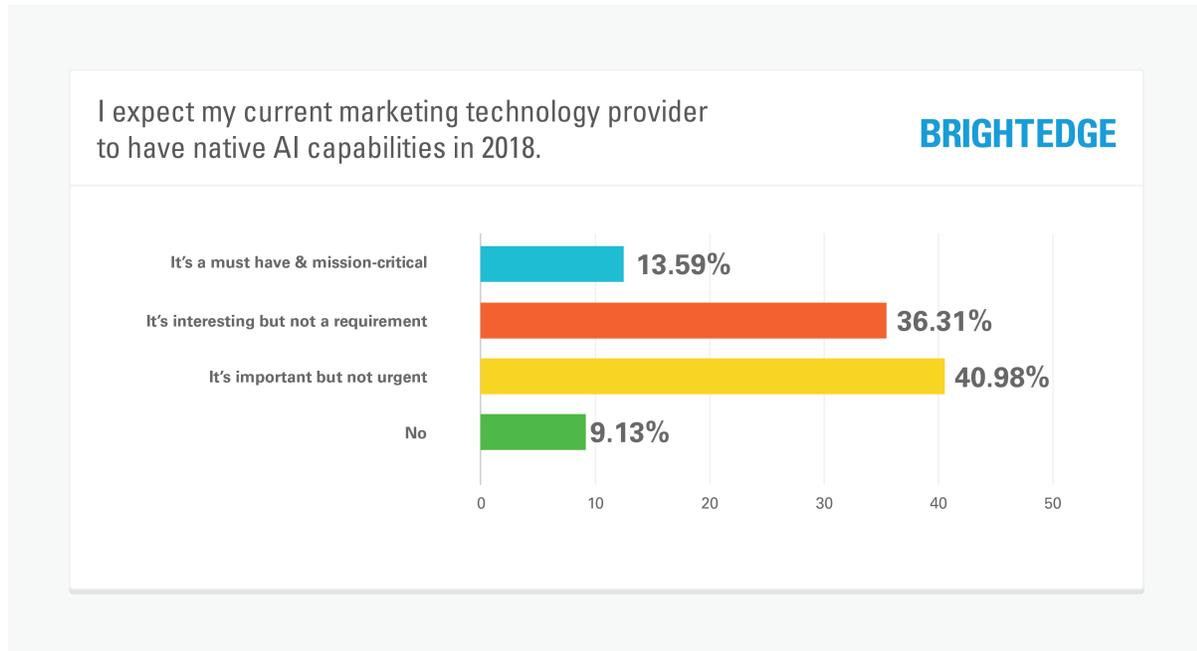

Answers

It's a must have	13.59%
Interesting	36.31%
Important	40.98%
No	9.13%

What success stories are you seeing with AI?

What success stories are you seeing with AI?

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Better understanding of the customer	**31.42%**	
More productivity and time-savings	**27.39%**	
Better performing content	**14.65%**	
Increased ROI	**8.07%**	
Other	**18.47%**	
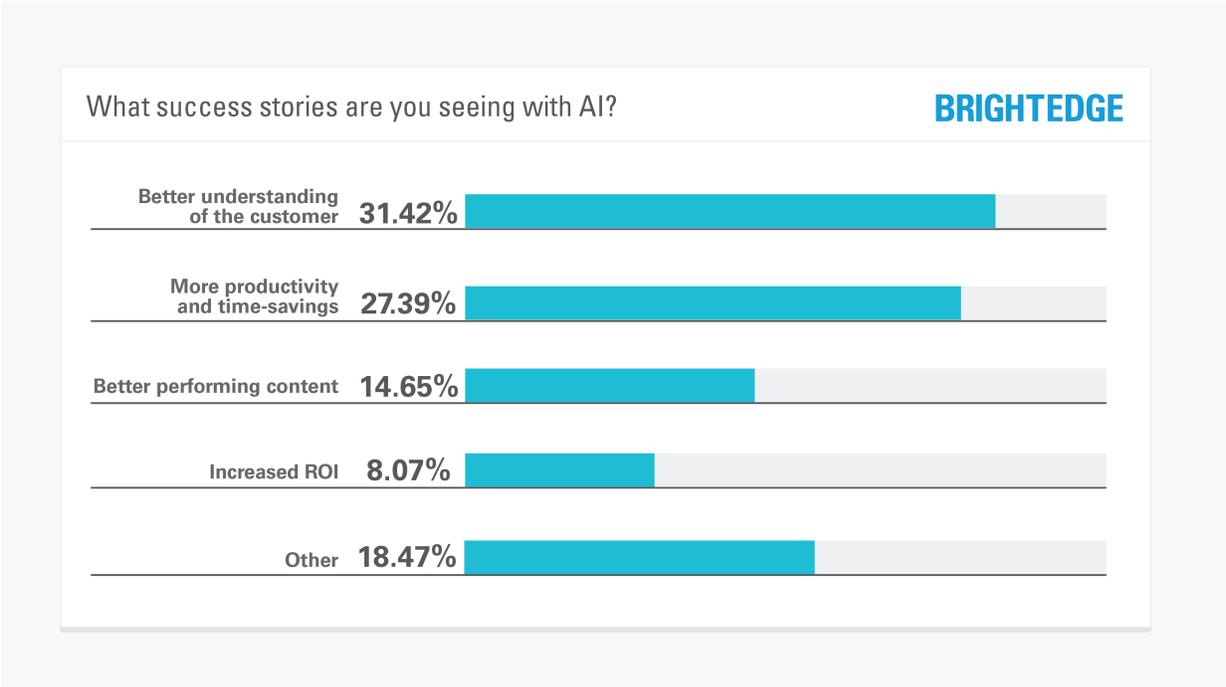
Answers

Better understanding of the customer	31.42%
More productivity and time savings	27.39%
Better performing content	14.65%
Increased ROI	8.07%
Other	18.47%

What are the greatest obstacles marketers face with integrating AI?
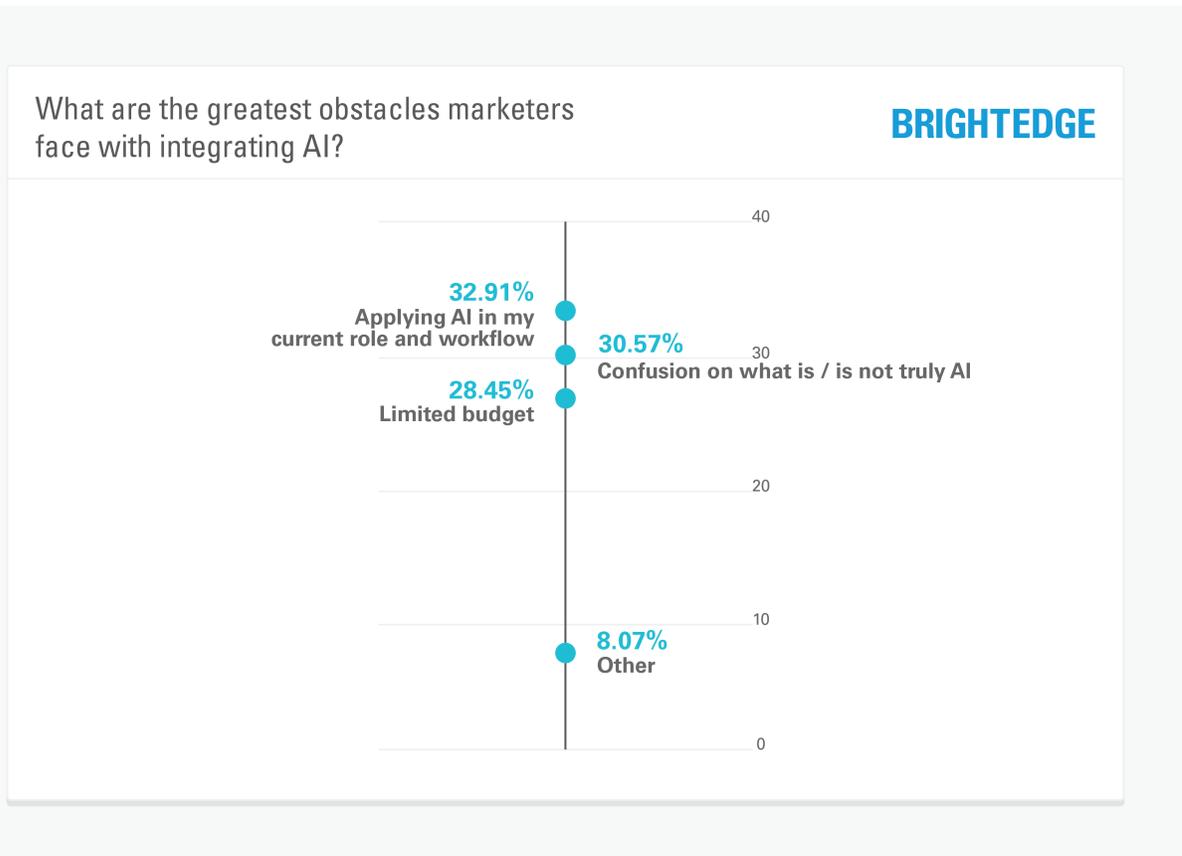
Answers

Applying AI in current role and workflow	32.91%
Confusion on what is / is not AI	30.57%
Limited budget	28.45%
Other	8.07%

Do you have a Data Scientist at your company?

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- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

31.43%

58.57%

10%
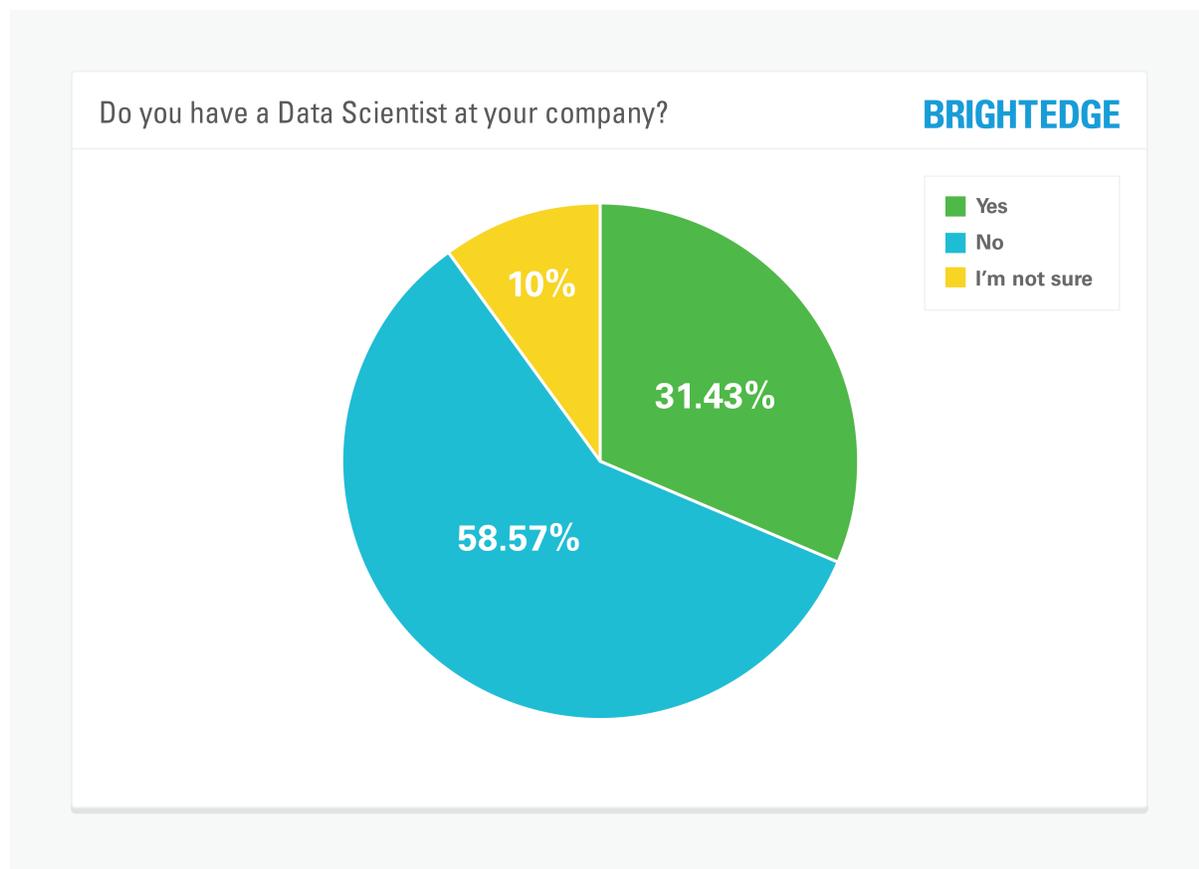
Answers

|	
Yes	31.43%
No	58.57%
Not sure	10.00%

Further Resources

On Demand Webinar: Listen to Paul Roetzner from the Marketing AI Institute share insights into the what, how, and where of AI in this webinar hosted by BrightEdge.

Download the webinar here: Marketing in a Machine Age

Join AI experts at Share SF on October 9 – 10, 2018.

If you want to learn more about AI and how to apply, join us in San Francisco for Share 18, our annual customer conference. We'll explore how marketers are using AI and automation to unify search and content marketing strategy. We also have an amazing session with Paul and others leading the way in AI.

https://www.brightedge.com/events/share18

About BrightEdge

BrightEdge, the global leader in enterprise organic search and content performance, empowers marketers to transform online content into business results, such as traffic, conversions, and revenue. The BrightEdge S3 platform is powered by a sophisticated deep learning engine and is the only company capable of web wide, real-time measurement of content engagement across all digital channels, including search, social, and mobile. BrightEdge's 1,500+ customers include global brands such as 3M, Microsoft, and Nike as well as 57 of the Fortune 100. The company has eight offices worldwide and is headquartered in Foster City, California.

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